



Signature 702 SB (SPORTSBRIDGE)

Introducing the third boat in the Signature 702 Series, the 702 Sportsbridge. This is a 4 berth overnight cruiser developed on the outstanding 702 Signature variable deadrise hull it shares with the 702 C (Cabin).

This model has been coming for some time, and was in fact shown at the Sydney and Brisbane Boat Shows this year.

Last month, we had the opportunity of trying it for the first time during the final 'shoot' for the 1999 Haines Signature Catalogue.

As regular readers will be aware, we've published a great deal of work around this hull. The 702 WA (Walkaround) was the basis of F&B's Project Boat for 1996-97, and we spent many hundreds of hours onboard this outstanding boat. Later, with the Walkaround ("Take Two") sold, we then had the opportunity of working with the 702 C when we took it up to Lucinda in FNQ, with the first of the turbo diesel Holden Suburbans.

An amazing exercise, it was hard to know which was the more impressive - the EFI 210 hp V-6 Mercruiser powered 702 C, the awesome 6.7 L Holden Suburban, or the fishing off Lucinda. (*Gotta tell you, it was mighty hard to come back from that trip !*)

SPECIFICATIONS

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| Manufacturer | . Haines Marine Industries |
| Model/Designation | Signature 702 SB |
| Type | Sportsbridge |
| Construction | GRP |
| Length, on trailer, in garage | 8.71 m |
| Length, Sprit to duckboard | 7.71 m |
| Length, stem head to transom | 6.87 m |
| Maximum Beam | 2.5 m |
| Deadrise | (SVDH) 33-21 degrees |
| Hull Draught | 0.4 m |
| Hull (only) dry weight | 1,300 kg |
| BMT Weight for highway | 2.94 tonne |
| Minimum horsepower | 135 hp |
| Maximum Horsepower | 210 hp |
| Outboard Option | Yes |
| Fuel Capacity | 260 L |
| Water Capacity | 90 L |
| People Capacity | 6-8 |
| Berths | Four |
| BMT Packages from | \$65-75 |

Rather than go back through old ground, suffice to say here that we still have back issues of the Walkabout Report (F&B #31) and the in-depth report on the 702 C (with the same MerCruiser V-6 210 hp EFI engine that's in this Sportsbridge) published in F&B #38.

Design: The 702 Sportsbridge is a dead ringer for the original Haines Signature 700 Sportsbridge which has now been out of production for several years.

In essence, the 702 Series recaptures most of the advantages of the original 700 model, but offers the advantages of the variable deadrise hull.

For readers who have not read the earlier articles about the 702, the advantages of the variable deadrise design technique can be summed up as offering:

1. Extremely high stability, both at rest and under way.
2. The ability to plane at low speeds.
3. A very soft ride in short, choppy water commonly found in Australia's bays and estuaries.
4. Near perfect manners in rough offshore conditions regardless of the direction the hull is tracking.

In this case, Haines Signature have taken their hull mould, and

much of the 702 C's deck, and reworked the mould in such a way that the bridge deck over the cabin below, is all one vast, seamless fibreglass moulding.

All of this adds to the rigidity and the immense strength of this hull, let alone the more mundane issues of being totally water proof and sealed from the elements. It also means you can wash the whole lot out with a hose - a very Australian tradition, but nevertheless vitally important.

The layout is time proven and



practical. Ahead in the forepeak area are two long berths, with a separate and private toilet/shower compartment to starboard, immediately behind the helmsman's controls on the upper bridge deck. Access to those controls and the instruments is very good.

Unusual Access: On the port side there is a rather odd 'landing' providing access to the double berth under the bridge deck. It is odd because the American boatbuilders (especially those who mastered the art of bridge deck cruisers many years ago) traditionally have their access behind or under the lift-out stairs, and usually from the centre line of the boat.

Here, Haines Signature has permanently fixed the stairs in position, and provided access to the double berth back under the bridge deck from a dedicated "flat" or "landing" on the port side where the galley (normally stands in the 702 C (cabin) model.

For the 702 Sportsbridge, the galley is relocated out into the cockpit behind the curved passenger chair - a move that will be welcomed by northern readers in WA, NT and QLD, although viewed with some dismay (I suspect) by our southern readers.

However, as I believe the Sportsbridge is more suited to northern climates than southern, and the 702 C more suited to the south than the north, I suspect John Haines worked all this out a long time ago!

Summing Up: the 702 Sportsbridge has two normal vee berths in the forward section of the cabin, a separate and fully enclosed toilet and shower room to starboard, and a queen size berth underneath the bridge deck, for a total of four permanent berths.

Out In The Cockpit: Up the stairs again, the bridge deck is a

conventional layout. The helmsman sits to starboard on a single pedestal seat, and there's an interesting curved passenger seat, to port. Behind this and down on the lower cockpit level there is provision for a galley to be installed, and at the very least, it's an ideal spot for a bait prep area and hand basin - options most sportfishermen will quickly adopt.

Fitted as a galley, there is a moulded sink, and provision for an (optional) pressure water system and a small butane stove.

Good design features include a near full width icebox running across the cockpit and forming the step up to the bridge deck - good thinking, 99! Behind this step is the cockpit, which is identical to the 702 C.

The 702 SB is available as a single stern drive, but will be available with a single or twin engined pod off the transom in the near future.

Underway: The 702 Sportsbridge has virtually identical performance and handling characteristics to the 702 C from which it's been developed.

It has a delightful cruising speed in the 18-20 knot area, and like the 702 C, is a superb match with the MerCruiser EFI V-6 .

We previously logged this economical V-6 running around 23 litres per hour area at cruising speeds, suggesting the SB with its 260 litre tank will have a working range of approximately 225 nm - which is good news for our Top End readers who frequently work 70 and 80 miles out to the 'Reef on both sides of Australia.

Conclusion: This is a pretty heavy cruiser, and it likes big water. It provides a degree of ride comfort and a feeling of solidarity you don't normally find in boats under 25-26 feet.

Unfortunately, this weight will

mitigate against the 702 SB on the highway, where the combined trailer, motor and boat package comes in at 2.94 tonnes. This puts it firmly into the "very serious" category of towing in the states that recognise 150% kerb weight limits, let alone NSW, where only trucks and vehicles of the Holden Suburban calibre will be able to tow this much weight.

I suspect many will be sold to people who are planning to buy a Riviera or SeaRay in the next year or two, but want a boat to keep on the marina in the meantime. In that context, the 702 SB with an operational price tag around \$75,000, four berths, excellent handling and ride, plus the extremely high resale value of the Haines Signature brand, will certainly be a big hit this summer.

It also has real application to the sportfishing community. I can see quite a few being developed by Victorian and Southern NSW readers who are passionate about fishing the Montague Island to Gabo Island strip along the South Coast of NSW. For them, this could well be the ultimate cruiser for heavy duty sportfishing for the yellowfin, mako shark and the billfish so keenly sought in these waters.

It also provides a practical, 'can do' sports cruiser that can easily and comfortably stay out overnight in the pursuit of broadbill swordfish, let alone more ordinary species such as yellowfin, albacore, stripies, and the like.

For further information, please call Greg Haines, Haines Marine Industries, 140 Viking Drive Wacol Queensland 4076 Phone (07) 3271 4400

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